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Tributes to

Abraham Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources providing testimonials lauding the 16th President of the United States

Writings of, and references to,

Joseph Fort Newton

From the files of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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Newton, Joseph Fort

The Saturday Sermon

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

TEXT: "A man shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32:2.

The birthday of Lincoln! What a life to read, what a name to honor and remember. His spirit is a consecration of his country.

What noble integrity, what high courage, what delicate justice and melting pity. What loyalty to the ideal, what common sense touched with poetry, what heights of vision and valleys of melancholy, what tear-freighted humor.

Dr. Newton

The influence of Lincoln continues and increases, not only as a great character and man of state, but as a spiritual thinker, a mystic, a seer. In him the religious principle realized in the sphere of morality the unity of mankind, and in the realm of history the unity of the nation.

Ten books about him appeared last year, not counting two in England. He had the vital mind, the spiritual quality, the magnanimous heart, and the practical capacity to do. As his law partner said, "His practical life was spiritual"; he gave both a legal and a religious reason for a political act.

'Either All or None'

As a lad he had a simple directness of mind that went to the core of any matter, as when he asked his friend, Mentor Graham, "Do you think that God ever gets mad?" Graham, puzzled by the question, finally said, "It hardly seems the thing for God to do. He ought to be able to control His temper."

"I'm glad to hear you say that," said Lincoln. "I've been writing something on that subject." He gave a paper to Graham, who read it, and reports that it was a closely reasoned Bible argument about the love of God, showing that the love of God never fails, and that "It is either all or none."

were moral principles. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." As Stephens of Georgia said, "In him the Union rose to the sublimity of a religious mysticism." Here, truly, was a different kind of politician.

All through the writings of Lincoln there is a deep sense of national sin, involving both North and South in its guilt. There it was, and it saddened his heart, and it cried out for atonement. It is the haunting undertone of the stately lines of the Second Inaugural Address, the one document in our history most like the writings of the prophets of the Bible.

'We Have Forgotten God'

Who can read that Address—every American ought to know it by heart — and not feel his soul stand still, while the President tells us of the sin of our nation and the judgment of God? "As was said three thousand years ago, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Did any other President ever speak such words as these in a proclamation, words as true today as they were then? "We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown, but we have forgotten God. Intoxicated by unbroken success, we have become too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us to confess our national sin, and pray for clemency and forgiveness." Mark well, it is not "you" but "we" who have sinned.

Once he was reported to have said, in a mood of depression, "If our American society and the United States Government are demoralized and overthrown, it will come from the voracious desire for office, this wiggle to live without toil, work and labor, from which I am not free myself."

Born of Love

Those last words tell how he identified himself with his people, North and South alike, in their weaknesses and sins, their petty greeds and lazy drifting. No wonder men heard their own souls speak to them in the tones of his voice, sometimes in sharp

THE EVENING BULLETIN, PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1949

Newton, Joseph Fort

Everyday Living

By Joseph Fort Newton

Lincoln

WHY do men love Lincoln? In the Chicago World's Fair in 1892, the leaders of the religious faiths of mankind assembled. The names of many saints were spoken, Paul, Francis, Wesley.

When the name of Lincoln was spoken, the vast assembly rose, and its applause was like an anthem. Lincoln has become for people of every race not only a friend, a neighbor, but a saint.

Yet the elements in his nature were so ordinary. His intellect, as Phillips Brooks said, was so moral, and his morality so intelligent, that we cannot distinguish the one from the other.

"A common man expanded to giant proportions," as Joshua Speed described him.

No, it is not the mind of Lincoln that men love, much as they may admire his practical canniness and the mysterious largeness of his vision. It is the human-heartedness of the man, his pathos.

Merciful to others, distrustful of himself, he was humble of spirit. "Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" was the first line of his best beloved poem; and it told his secret.

Here among us there grew a man as noble in his self-forgetfulness, as heroic in his fortitude, as pathetic in his loneliness, as lovable in his quaint wisdom, his homely humor, and his gentle-heartedness as any in the pages of Plutarch.

Old-fashioned honesty, a delicate sense of justice, joined with an everlasting mercy, mixed with patience and kindness, faith in God and love of man—of such stuff Lincoln was made.

Long live the name and spirit of Lincoln! By as much as we follow him, by so much and so fast do we climb out of the night that covers us.

Let us here "highly resolve" to follow no man who has not a like spirit, a like humility, disinterestedness, and pity.

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Everyday Living

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Newton, Joseph Fort

SAYS WE NEED LINCOLN SPIRIT

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton Is Speaker at Annual Church Dinner.

Detroit News
2-12-35

"We need the courage and wisdom of Washington, the practical sagacity of Franklin, and the haunting spiritual simplicity of Lincoln in an age violent, disruptive, confused and explosive," the Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, D. D., of Philadelphia, Pa., declared at the sixth annual Washington-Lincoln dinner of the Central Woodward Christian Church, Monday night.

"As we study him, Lincoln takes his place as one of the supreme, simple, sacrificial spirits of all history. His capacity for growth was perhaps the greatest thing about him.

"Lincoln had three things to do. It was necessary for him to think through, and see through, a great national problem. He had the moral insight of a seer combined with the astuteness and canniness of a schemer. His was a slow and cautious mind. He was not a creative thinker like Jefferson, but he was a moral thinker. At the basis of his life there was a grand moral fatalism.

"Having thought his way through, he had to possess the powers to convince the country his solution was right, and to do that he had to be a great orator. He had a high-keyed voice, not always musical; he used few gestures. He was not a Henry Clay or a William Jennings Bryan. But he was a man who could put more flesh on the skeleton of an idea with fewer words than any man who has ever spoken in this world. His oratory had a prophetic element and a moral mysticism.

"Finally, he had to lead in working out this problem in practical politics, and in an embattled nation. I have seen his notes as he thought these things out, how he tried to understand the South. He was one of the few men on this earth who wanted to do justice justly, who thought righteousness should be righteous.

"The study of Lincoln, tallest, greatest, noblest soul who walked the New World, I account as one of the profoundest spiritual experiences of my life."

The Rev. Edgar DeWitt Jones, D. D., minister of the church, who originated the annual dinner, presided. Among his guests at the speakers' table were P. W. A. Fitzsimmons, Mr. and Mrs. Pliny W. Marsh, Frederic T. Harward, Miss Mary Louise Quaife, Dean and Mrs. Kirk B. O'Ferrall, the Hon. Fritz Hailer, German vice-consul, and his son, Fritz; Dr. William B. Newton, M. D., of Alpena, brother of the speaker; and William O. Stoddard, Jr., son of one of Lincoln's secretaries.

Newton, Rev. Joseph Fort

LINCOLN

Address Delivered by Rev. Joseph Fort Newton Before the State Encampment of the Iowa G. A. R. at Sioux City, June 9.

Cedar Rapids Republican - 6-11-1915

Commander, members of the Grand Army and Ladies and Gentlemen:

Every nation has its typical man; every people has its character in whom is embodied the faith, the genius and the spirit of that people. It has been held that the best story of the world is the story of its great epoch-making men. Thus the moral idealism of the Hebrews found embodiment in Moses, who walked upon the heights and made eternal truth inhabit human hearts. Julius Caesar was the Roman spirit magnified and clarified; and if we would wish to know what Greece was, not as the poets saw it, but as it really was, we have only to know Euripides. It was not Goethe with his culture, but Martin Luther with his rude vigor and his rich humanity, who incarnated the soul of Germany. The typical man of modern Italy is Mazzini; of Russia, Tolstoi.

The typical man of America, the one in whom the mighty and tender spirit of this republic found incarnation as in no other, was Abraham Lincoln. (Applause.) A child of the south like Lee, a leader of the north like Grant, he grew up in the valley of the Father of Waters, the son of a pioneer; grew to be so tall of soul that he was the one master mind of his period who could see the whole scene, and embody in his life and his character the stupendous tragedy in which he stood. Men like Lowell and Emerson saw Lincoln for what he was while he was still alive—that is, they saw him not only as a man but as a symbol, and it was this vision that led Lowell to call him "the first American"; and it led Emerson to say, "He is the representative of this continent."

Therefore about such a man there is a certain mystery, a vague pervasive appeal to all that is native and noble with us, a sanctity half tragic and half triumphant. If anyone wishes to know what America means, he has only to look into the face of Lincoln, so strong, so gentle, so human, writ ten all over with the hieroglyphics of sorrow, yet having lines wnere smiles fell asleep when they were weary. If anyone would know the spirit of America, that which has created this republic, he need only study that face with the marks of struggle in it, the light of high resolve, the touch of an infinite pity; a faoe neither rudely masculine nor softly feminine, yet having in it something to remind you of the boy and the mother behind the man. To study that face with its deep set eyes that never lie, with its rugged gentleness, is to know something of what human life is, something of the cost of all progress, something of the glory of noble human sacrifice.

What was the spirit that found incarnation in Lincoln? It was the spirit of America. And what is that spirit? What is the spirit that underlies all our institutions, touches them with its light and its prophecy and which cements us into the first and freest of republics? It is not easily analyzed. There are those who tell us that we are sordid folk in America, sodden in materialism, and there are others who tell us with equal emphasis that we are a nation of incurable idealists.

Now the fact of the matter is that both of these statements are true, and that the glory of America lies in the faot that it has a robust realism and common sense, shot through and transfigured by spiritual fineness, by lofty idealism. Stephen Graham, having followed the Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem, thought to follow the poor emigrants to America, and he described his journey as a journey from the most mythical of all lands to the most material. And yet we place Tolstoi as the typical man of Russia, typical of its light and shadow, of its strength and its gentleness, alongside of Lincoln as the typical man of America, who will say that America has no mysticism or idealism at its heart? Was it not Tolstoi who, looking across the world fifty years ago when Lincoln fell, said, "He was a Christ in miniature."

These two things must always be kept together, our robust common sense and our spiritual idealism. Because this is so, because this is really the spirit of our republic, we have grown in our midst two types of men. There is, first of all, the practical, sagacious man who sees things as they are, takes hold of them firmly, and makes them obey his will—such a man as Franklin, "our Shakespeare with his wings clipped" Then there is the other type of man, all sensitiveness and suffering, who feels the weight of human woe—such a man as John Woolman, the Quaker. Food cooked by the hands of slaves he could not eat. Any form of cruelty afflicted him with "bowedness of spirit," to use his own words. He was a man who suffered not only for the sins but in the sorrows of his fellow men.

Now the glory of Lincoln was that he had a nature spacious enough, rich enough, deep enough, high enough, to include within himself both of these types and be as practical as Benjamin Franklin and as humane as John Woolman. That is to say, he united within himself that robust realism, that splendid common sense, with the gentler, finer, loftier spirit that has lent wings to our poets and visions to our prophets. A mind relentless in its search for the truth, he had a heart that was limitless in its charity, and it is because he was large eough to embody the whole spirit of our republic that he has become and is today a symbol of that to which men would commit their souls and would follow as they follow a star

To tell you in detail of the making of this man would be impossible in a brief hour like this, how a man who grew up in the back yard of a republic, ascended in an hour of revolution to the loftiest height that a human being may occupy upon this earth; how a village fabulist and athlete was so trained by God in the discipline and vicissitudes of life that he became the heroic leader of a great nation in its hour of tragedy; how the young lad who wrote the fantastic lines of "The Chronicles of Reuben," could at last write the simple and great words of the Gettysburg address—this would be to tell a story which, did we not know it to be a fact, would be counted a great romancee, as indeed it is.

"Blend of mirth and sadness, smiles and tears,
Quaint knight-errant of the pioneers,
Homely hero born of storm and sod.
A peasant prince and masterpiece of God."

Instead, then of telling the story of Lincoln in detail which is so well known, but not all known by any means, for I could tell you much that has not ben printed about him; instead of telling that story, let me ask you to consider three things. First of all, the problem through which Lincoln had to think his way. Yes, he had a rich humor, he had a homely common sense, he had a tender heart, but when all is said perhaps the greatest thing about Lincoln was his genius as a thinker. And this mighty thinker, this mighty mind, strong and sure in its power, was confronted with one of the most difficult problems that ever faced the thinker; not an abstract question, but a real problem, how to abolish slavery and yet to preserve the Union.

There were men at that time, good men, true men, noble men, who thought they saw through the problem. The madcaps and hotspurs of

solved by secession. The radicals of the North were equally sure that they saw through the problem and that it could be solved in the same manner. But the greater mind, who saw the larger scene and grappled with the larger problem, was not so certain. Radical in his sympathy, he was the most tantalizingly conservative man. Lincoln was a man who hated slavery as much as Wendell Phillips or Lovejoy could hate it, and who yet had the insight to see beyond that problem the greater issue of the existence of the Union, and, as he said in his letter to Greeley, "he wished to save the Union, without slavery if possible, with slavery if we must, but to save the Union."

Lincoln knew that neither the North nor the South would ever go to war on the slavery issue alone. He saw more deeply than they saw who think that the slavery issue was the real cause of the Civil War. It was the immediate inciting cause, but the real cause lay further back and deeper down, and Lincoln understood it. He understood that only a tiny fraction of the people in the South, a little more than one-eighth, owned slaves at all. To be sure, that tiny fraction was an aristocracy which dominated the South, the press and the pulpit of the South, and dared to make its exit from power a signal for revolution. Nevertheless it was only a small minority of the people of the South. No, Lincoln perceived that old scion that had obtained in our history from the very foundation of the republic. He understood, as we ought to understand today, that the shot fired in southeastern Europe or the militarism of the German Empire are only the superficial inciting causes of that stupendous conflict now dragging its bloody way along in Europe. If we look deeply into our own history it will be clear to us that back of the slavery problem two civilizations existed on our shores, two ideals of life, two philosophies of government, each growing and struggling to be uppermost, and that the clash was inevitable. Just as above the war in Europe today, as above the ancient conflict in Troy, there are two battles waging, one in the invisible air, a battle of ideas and of ideals like the battle of the gods and goddesses around ancient Troy; the other upon the blood-stained earth between the peoples of Europe; just so above the battlefield of Gettysburg, above the long lines of blue and gray that swept to and fro on those three days, there was a conflict of ideals between feudalism and democracy.

May I not tell you that I speak this afternoon as a child of the South, as a son of a southern soldier, and count it a great honor to speak to the men who fought my fathers? Therefore I surely ought to know the spirit and history of the South. The southern civilization was noble and beautiful; it had culture; it had refinement; it had an instinct and art of hospitality unsurpassed. Nevertheless it was a feudalism, resting in large part upon the basis of slavery, and an institution like that, however gracious it may be in its social charm, could not permanently endure in a republic.

It was this clash of fundamental ideals which caused the Civil War. Mark Twain understood that when he said that the Civil War was a fight between Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns. Down south we read Sir Walter Scott for his pride of blood and extraction, his pictures of old chivalry, his romances of old aristocracy. It was he who made every other man in the south either a Major or a Colonel In the North Robert Burns reigned. He was the favorite and best loved poet of Lincoln, and he it was who said and set to the everlasting music of truth that "A man is a man for a' of that," whether black or white or brown It was the clash of these two ideals that issued in the civil war. No one understood this more perfectly than the calm, clear-seeing Lincoln, who had no bitterness and no illusions; and his only solution for the slavery problem was to limit it, push it back into the corner of the republic and let it die of its own rot, or else buy up the slaves outright and return them to the land whence they came. And while he meditated upon the problem and prayed over it through the long years, when at last he came face to face with the task, of a sudden the cloud of war covered him and the storm broke upon him; but he had thought his way through with a seerlike power of thought given only to the loftiest of the sons of men.

Not only had he to think his way through the problem, but he had to convince his fellow citizens that his was the right way, and this required that he be a great master of speech. All now agree that no voice speaking in the last century uttered words so much like those mighty words that speak to us out of the old Hebrew centuries and which still live and flash in the Bible. For this task he had trained himself assiduously, faithfully, learning the use of words, their weight and power, learning how to write a sentence with the fewest possible words and to write it so lucidly that not even a shadow would hang over his meaning. Thus he trained himself through long years of austere discipline and at last stood forth at the call of a great critical hour and spoke with the ultimate grace of simplicity words that fell like the hush and the thrill of an apparition. There are those here, no doubt, who heard Lincoln speak. They know that he spoke calmly, with very few gestures, with a voice that had in it very little native melody, but that his words seemed surcharged with moral electricity; that he spoke as a prophet of righteousness and not simply as a politician; and that there were hours like the close of the debate at Ottawa, like the evening when he delivered the speech in Springfield in which he said "a house divided against itself cannot stand," hours of vision, of conquest, when the souls of men heard only their own voices in the tones of the orator. That is why, just as the speech of Pericles, in praise of the heroes of Marathon, has lived these more than two thousand years, just so the great and simple words of the great and simple Lincoln at Gettysburg will live as long as men love liberty and as long as our language and our history endure. (Applause.)

Nevertheless we somehow instinctively distrust the mere orator. The more fascinating he is in his speech, the more willing we are to listen to him in his gracious appeal, the more certain we are not to commit the greatest responsibility into his hands. That is why we have so remorselessly defeated some of the most lovable and charming men in our history when they aspired to sit in the White House. We loved them too well to vote for them. Here again Lincoln was the exception to the rule. Not only because he lived in an hour of revolution but because of the quality of his genius, because God had providently trained him to think, to speak and to do, in an hour of upheaval this man who had never held an executive office, who was utterly untried, was lifted and given the reins of supreme power by the confidence of a great nation. And just as he was a victorious thinker, just as he was triumphant as an orator, even so with that capacity for growth which always marked his life, he measured up to his task and proved himself to be one of the most alert, sagacious, far-seeing, patient executives the world has ever known. (Applause).

Surely a shrewder man has never lived among us. His divination of coming events, his power to read human nature were almost uncanny. The strategy with which he managed that company of able men, the ablest at his command, who formed his cabinet, ruling them while letting them think that they were ruling him, graciously swaying them and moulding them when they were sure that they were directing him, the almost unearthly strategy of the man in that difficult position will remain as a testimony to his canniness. But more than all, during the dreadful ordeal of blood and fire and tears, when passions were wild and grew wilder, he was great enough to keep a heart of unalloyed gentleness, pity and forgiveness, and this it was that enshrined him not only in the hearts of the men of this republic, but in the hearts of humanity everywhere; so that wherever man struggles and aspires, wherever he seeks to rise above harsh conditions and wherever he demands the rights that belong to manhood, the right to stretch his arms and his soul, and live and love and look up at the stars, somehow, no matter what language he speaks or in what corner of the world he lives, somehow he feels that Lincoln is his friend. And it was the splendid quality of common sense, of sagacious reading of life, of deep pity, all touched with this magical thing, this mystical thing that we call human sympathy that in him was almost divine, that makes his words to this day rise up and march with the hearts of men wherever they are heard and read.

How different the day in which he lived. To those of us who are young it seems incredible that our fathers could have found no better way of solving the slavery issue than to draw their swords and throw their scabbards away. To us it seems impossible that anyone could have listened to the words of Lincoln on that

Newton, Joseph Fort

TROIT FREE PRESS-

Lincoln

By Joseph Fort Newton

Why do men love Lincoln? In the Chicago World Fair in 1892, the leaders of the religious faiths of mankind assembled. The names of many saints were spoken, Paul, Francis, Wesley.

When the name of Lincoln was spoken, the vast assembly rose, and its applause was like an anthem. Lincoln has become for people of every race not only a friend, a neighbor, but a saint!

Yet the elements in his nature were so ordinary. His intellect, as Phillips Brooks said, was so normal, and his morality so intelligent, that we cannot distinguish the one from the other.

"A common man expanded to giant proportions," as Joshua Speed, his best friend, described him. There is a mystery about Lincoln, but it is the mystery of simple, homey, common things, blended.

No, it is not the mind of Lincoln that men love, much as they may admire his practical canniness and the mysterious largeness of his vision. It is the human-heartedness of the man, his pathos.

Merciful to others, distrustful of himself, he was humble of spirit. "Why should the spirit of mortals be proud?" was the first line of his best beloved poem; and it told his secret.

Here among us there grew a man as noble in his self-forgetfulness, as heroic in his fortitude, as pathetic in his loneliness, as lovable in his quaint wisdom, his homely humor, and his gentleheartedness as any in the pages of Plutarch in days of old.

Old-fashioned honesty, a delicate sense of justice, joined with an everlasting mercy, mixed with patience and kindness, faith in God and love of man—of such stuff Lincoln was made.

Long live the name and spirit of Lincoln! By as much as we follow him, by so much and so fast do we climb out of the night that covers us toward the star of happy light to lead us.

Let us here "highly resolve" to follow no man who has not a like spirit, a like humility, disinterestedness, and pity.

(Copyright, 1939)

Newton, Joseph Fort

Lincoln

By Joseph Fort Newton

The figure of Lincoln towers aloft today, stately, strong, gentle, against a background of barbarism, in which pigmy dictators dance like dervishes, hissing hatred, venting their vengeance and their vanity.

Tall, angular, homely, eloquent, his great and simple words march up and down in our hearts like divine music, appealing to "the better angles of our nature," haunting us like old, eternal words of the Bible.

"I shall do nothing through malice; the things with which I have to do are too great for malice." Those words strike a chord like the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven; they belong to the sacred writing of the race.

If the words of Pericles in praise of the heroes of Greece have lived twenty centuries, the address of Lincoln at Gettysburg will live as long as men love liberty and value the moral sanctities of life.

The dictators of our time will have their day and cease to be, remembered only to be despised—tyrants trampling liberty down—but Lincoln will be loved for his justice, his mercy and his magnanimity.

A mystic, a seer, a moral prophet, clear of vision, infinite in patience, uniting a sense of right with an everlasting mercy—there is something in Lincoln we dare not let die, lest we cease to be human.

If by some art we could send the spirit of Lincoln into the dark corners of the world, what a different place the earth would be—pity and laughter and loving kindness would return to the common ways of man.

The spirit of Lincoln—it will never let us rest until every man, woman and child has liberty and fair-play; the right to live and the right to work, room to stretch their souls and look up into the face of God.

What a life to read, honor and remember—what fine integrity, what high courage, what wise humility, what tear-freighted humor; it is a story to exalt and ennoble our faith and to purify our dreams.

Lincoln lived and died for liberty and unity—by as much as we are true to his spirit and faith, and grow up to his stature, by so much are we worthy of the heritage and the heroism of our republic.

Chicago Evening American 2/12/41

Newton, Joseph Fort

Friday, February 12, 1937

Everyday Living

Deep Mystery Encircling Lincoln's Memory Exists as It Did Around His Living Person.

By JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

AFTER the death of St. Francis it was the habit of his disciples, when writing to one another, to close their letters with the simple, tender words, "Yours in the holy memory."

It means much that the writer of these words, a child of the South, the son of a man who wore the gray, bows in love and awe before the great and gentle memory of Lincoln, himself a son of the South.

Once again, in the thin, worn figure of a country lawyer, the mighty and tender spirit of this land took heroic and hallowing shape, and spoke to the souls of men in simple, familiar words.

Never in our history have the qualities of seer, orator and leader met in any person as they did in that strange, sad, lonely man, whose life is a legend like the great ones of old.

Simple, wise, far-seeing, he belongs of right with the prophets of righteousness and the doers of the will of God, uniting a relentless justice with the touch of an everlasting mercy.

Lowly-born, self-taught, he towered above his fellows, and the future cast over him its light and pall, giving wings to his words, and a nameless grace to his sacrificial spirit.

There was a mystery in Lincoln; men felt it, followed it, loved it, while not understanding what it was that stirred them so deeply. They feel it to this day, though time has dimmed much else.

It was this mystical quality that made friendship with him like a religious experience in early days; and today, when men speak of him, a light comes into their eyes and they speak softly.

What a life to read, what a name to honor and remember! What noble integrity, what high courage, what delicate humanity and melting pity! What haunting melancholy, what tear-freighted humor!

By as much as we are true to the spirit of Lincoln and grow up to him, by so much do we become truly great as a nation, worthy of our history and the heroism of the legacy that he left us.

Detroit Free Press 2/2/36

Lincoln Legend

By Joseph Fort Newton

Lincoln, we are told, has become a legend, as much a myth as a man. He is not only a figure in our history, but an article in our faith; "a common man grown to the height of a giant," as Joshua Speed put it.

A recent writer traces the growth of the Lincoln legend, showing how, at first a brave, wise, kindly man, he became a hero, like Odin or Arthur, and finally a Messiah, "the religion of a religionless America."

In proof of it he recalls the haunting poems of Walt Whitman, "My Captain," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." He might also have quoted the words of Tolstoi, "He was a Christ in miniature."

As further proof he reminds us of the poems by Vachel Lindsay, written during the World War, "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," picturing the sorrowful spirit of Lincoln brooding over a world at war, grieving over the madness, the miseries and the mutilations of humanity.

Or the lovely lines of Edwin Markham, in which the Christ idea is carried even further: "Yes, over the whole world he bends to make the world a world of friends"—lines which all of us feel to be true.

No one can deny that such words are true to the soul of Lincoln, now set free from veils of flesh; his gentle heroic spirit writ large, and making its appeal "to the better angels of our nature."

For Lincoln—a child of the South like Lee, a leader of the North, like Grant—embodied the mighty and tender spirit of America, as no one else has done, in his faith and firmness, in his patience and pity.

In his tall, angular, homely, heroic figure he incarnated the tragedy, the trial, and the triumph of his nation. No wonder something of mystery, something of sanctity lingers about the memory of such a man; a strange pervasive appeal to the latent nobility hidden in every man.

If our love of Lincoln just stops short of idolatry, we need not apologize for it. Only, let us remember, we make a profession of high ideals when he pay a tribute of homage to his spirit, binding ourselves to an unbending justice blended with an everlasting mercy.

(Copyright, 1936)

EVERYDAY LIVING

Lincoln

By DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

AFTER the death of St. Francis it was the habit of his disciples, when writing to one another, to close their letters with the simple, tender words, "Yours in the Holy memory."

Dr. Newton

It means much that the writer of these words, a child of the South, the son of a man who wore the gray, bows in love and awe before the great and gentle memory of Lincoln, himself a son of the South.

Once again, in the thin, worn figure of a country lawyer, the mighty and tender spirit of this land took heroic and hallowing shape, and spoke to the souls of men in simple, familiar words.

Never in our history have the qualities of seer, orator and leader met in any person as they did in that strange, sad, lonely man, whose life is a legend like the great ones of old.

Simple, wise, far-seeing, he belongs of right with the prophets of righteousness and the doers of the will of God, uniting a relentless justice with the touch of an everlasting mercy.

Lowly-born, self-taught, he towered above his fellows, and the future cast over him its light and pall, giving wings to his words, and a nameless grace to his sacrificial spirit.

There was a mystery in Lincoln; men felt it, followed it, loved it, while not understanding what it was that stirred them so deeply. They feel it to this day, though time has dimmed much else.

It was this mystical quality that made friendship with him like a religious experience in early days; and today, when men speak of him, a light comes into their eyes and they speak softly.

What a life to read, what a name to honor and remember! What noble integrity, what high courage, what delicate humanity and melting pity! What hunting melancholy, what tear-freighted humor!

By as much as we are true to the spirit of Lincoln and grow up to him, by so much do we become truly great as a nation, worthy of our history and the heroism of the legacy that he left us.

Newton, Joseph Fort

LINCOLN

By DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

Pittsburgh Press 2/12/32

A MYSTERY, a sanctity half tragic and half triumphant, a pervasive appeal to the latent nobility in all men, lingers about the memory of Lincoln, making his life both a legacy and a legend.

Dr. Newton

If one would know what America means one need only look into that familiar face, so rugged, so homely, so human, so strong, so gentle, now lighted up with laughter, now beshadowed by melancholy.

It is a face neither rudely masculine nor softly feminine, but something in it makes one think of the mother and the boy behind the man; giving us a glimpse of what lies in the hearts of the lowliest.

Nay more, it is one of the most benign faces that look down upon us from the past, revealing something of the meaning of life itself, something of the worth and dignity of noble human living.

In those deep-set grey eyes that never lie, in the suggestion of a smile that had tears in it, in features marked with the seams of hard struggle, the light of high resolve, the pathos of a great compassion, we see what America is, what made it, and what it was meant to be.

Lincoln embodied the genius of our country as no one else has done, uniting the sagacity of Benjamin Franklin and the sensitive sympathy of John Woolman, with the clear vision of a prophet.

With a mind relentless in its search for the truth he joined a heart limitless in its charity, making him a type of that to which men would entrust their souls—a star to follow in the night.

No man of the White House ever made so profound a spiritual impression and appeal as Lincoln did in his last years, when a nameless, haunting grace seemed to cling to his words and acts of mercy.

If religion took this form in his life and character—an unfailing justice, an incorruptible integrity, and exquisite and moving pity—it is a prophecy of what life must be in this land.

Tall, gentle, homely, eloquent, "he belongs to the ages," at once a symbol and a prophecy, and of his fame there will be no end.

Newton, Joseph Fort

Everyday Living

By Joseph Fort Newton

Lincoln

WHY do men love Lincoln? In the Chicago World's Fair in 1892, the leaders of the religious faiths of mankind assembled. The names of many saints were spoken, Paul, Francis, Wesley.

When the name of Lincoln was spoken, the vast assembly rose, and its applause was like an anthem. Lincoln has become for people of every race not only a friend, a neighbor, but a saint.

Yet the elements in his nature were so ordinary. His intellect, as Phillips Brooks said, was so moral, and his morality so intelligent, that we cannot distinguish the one from the other.

"A common man expanded to giant proportions," as Joshua Speed described him.

No, it is not the mind of Lincoln that men love, much as they may admire his practical canniness and the mysterious largeness of his vision. It is the human-heartedness of the man, his pathos.

Merciful to others, distrustful of himself, he was humble of spirit. "Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" was the first line of his best beloved poem; and it told his secret.

Here among us there grew a man as noble in his self-forgetfulness, as heroic in his fortitude, as pathetic in his loneliness, as lovable in his quaint wisdom, his homely humor, and his gentle-heartedness as any in the pages of Plutarch.

Old-fashioned honesty, a delicate sense of justice, joined with an everlasting mercy, mixed with patience and kindness, faith in God and love of man—of such stuff Lincoln was made.

Long live the name and spirit of Lincoln! By as much as we follow him, by so much and so fast do we climb out of the night that covers us.

Let us here "highly resolve" to follow no man who has not a like spirit, a like humility, disinterestedness, and pity.

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Newton, Joseph Fort

EVERYDAY LIVING

Lincoln Legend

Pittsburgh Press 2-12-36

By DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

LINCOLN, we are told, has become a legend, as much a myth as a man. He is not only a figure in our history, but an article in our faith; "a common man grown to the height of a giant," as Joshua Speed put it.

Dr. Newton

A recent writer traces the growth of the Lincoln legend, showing how, at first a brave, wise, kindly man, he became a hero, like Odin or Arthur; and finally a Messiah, "the religion of a religionless America."

In proof of it he recalls the haunting poems of Walt Whitman, "My Captain," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." He might also have quoted the words of Tolstoi, "He was a Christ in miniature."

As further proof he reminds us of the poem by Vachel Lindsay, written during the World War, "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," picturing the sorrowful spirit of Lincoln brooding over a world at war, grieving over the madness, the miseries and the mutilations of humanity.

Or the lovely lines of Edwin Markham, in which the Christ idea is carried even further: "Yes, over the whole world he bends to make the world a world of friends"—lines—which all of us feel to be true.

No one can deny that such words are true to the soul of Lincoln, now set free from veils of flesh; his gentle heroic spirit writ large, and making its appeal "to the better angels of our nature."

In his tall, angular, homely, heroic figure he incarnated the tragedy, the trial, and the triumph of his nation. No wonder something of mystery, something of sanctity lingers about the memory of such a man; a strange pervasive appeal to the latent nobility hidden in every man.

If our love of Lincoln just stops short of idolatry, we need not apologize for it. Only, let us remember, we make a profession of high ideals when we pay a tribute of homage to his spirit, binding ourselves to an unbending justice blended with an everlasting mercy.

Newton, J. Fort

Northwestern Christian Advocate

February 11, 1920.

LINCOLN EVERY INCH A MAN

Nothing more noble than the character of Lincoln has ever been seen in the New World. The nearer one comes to him, the more one knows about him, the more stainless and just he seems to me. All men now know that the saving of the Union —without slavery, if possible, with slavery if necessary—was the one overmastering passion of his life, and that whoever else might lose heart, let go of faith, or sink into self-seeking, that would Lincoln never! Here, in the elemental qualities of the man—his courage, his honor, his loyalty to the ideal, his melting pity and his delicate justice, his scorn of cowardice, his instinctive championship of the weak; here the faith on which he acted is unveiled as it could never be in any list of dogmas. His life, like the life of the Master, was founded upon love—and the justice born of love. That love made him suffer, as love always does, and in the fiery furnace of that suffering he was purified, exalted, and taught the truth of all truths the greatest —that God is love.

No man ever had a loftier conception of the sanctity of law of the sacramental meaning of the state, than Lincoln had. His oath of office was a vow of consecration. As meditative as Marcus Aurelius and as blithe as Mark Twain, as simple as Æsop, yet as subtle as an Oriental, a calm, grave, strong man, formidable and sad, he stood in the White House a high priest of humanity, an awe-struck ministrant in the temple of God performing the rites of liberty, justice, and pity—presiding over an offering of blood and fire and tears! He was a man of God, plain, homely, kindly, who knew that humanity is deeply wounded somewhere and tried to heal it—and of his fame there will be no end.—*J. Fort Newton.*

Newton, Joseph Fort

A Picture

By Joseph Fort Newton

2/2/40

Here is a new story, one of many, in the new life of Lincoln, by Carl Sandburg—a picture no one can forget, which gives one an indescribable sense of the loneliness of the man.

It was early in 1863, and things were not going well for the Union cause. The country was restless, Congress was critical—only three men defended the President, fighting hard.

Wild rumors were flying everywhere, and even the family of the President came under suspicion for treason. The Senate Committee on the Conduct of the War met to consider the rumor.

The chairman had just called the committee to order, in secret session, when the officer stationed at the door as guard came in with a frightened look on his face, speechless.

Before anything could be said or done, the committee was astonished and overwhelmed to see the President himself, standing solitary, hat in hand, his form towering, and he said:

"I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, appear of my own volition before this committee of the Senate to say that I, of my own knowledge, know that it is untrue that any of my family hold treasonable communications with the enemy."

Having spoken those words, he turned and walked out of the room as swiftly and quietly as he had entered. The committee, stunned by his statement, hastily adjourned and went away.

The black gossip, of course, had reference to his wife, who, never popular as First Lady, and in many ways indiscreet, became the target of every kind of suspicion, and even slander.

About the lonely figure, bearing an intolerable burden, such gossip whirled and swirled. No man of the White House ever walked such a shadowy way, made the darker by human malice.

The penalty of serving a democracy is to be denounced and defamed in life, like the prophets of old, and, after death, to be enshrined in the grateful memory of the people.

Newton [illegible] Court DRAWER 27 Tributes